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Seniors and Community Supports

2008-11

Ministry Business Plan

Alberta

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Seniors and Community Supports

BUSINESS PLAN 2008-11

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The business plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2008 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as of March 18, 2008 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the business plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the business plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this business plan.

Mary Anne Jablonski, *Minister of Seniors and Community Supports*
March 28, 2008

THE MINISTRY

The Ministry consists of the Department of Seniors and Community Supports and the Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD) Community Boards.

The Department includes three divisions: Seniors Services, Disability Supports, and Community Support Programs and Strategic Planning. Corporate functions support department-wide operations. The Department provides administrative, planning and research support to the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The PDD Community Boards are agents of the Crown as established by the *Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Governance Act*. The Ministry continues to have some responsibility for seniors housing under the *Alberta Housing Act*.

VISION

A vibrant province where all Albertans live with dignity as full participants in society and experience the best possible well-being and independence.

MISSION

Enhance the independence, well-being and inclusion of seniors and persons with disabilities through programs, services, information, monitoring and strategic planning.

CORE BUSINESSES

Core Business 1: Provide targeted financial assistance

Goal 1: Seniors in need have access to financial assistance to support independence

Goal 2: Albertans with a severe and permanent disability have access to financial assistance that enables them to become as independent as possible

Core Business 2: Plan, provide and coordinate supports and services for living in the community

Goal 3: Seniors and persons with disabilities have appropriate supportive living options

Goal 4: The Ministry's health-related supports and services enhance independence and well-being

Goal 5: Seniors and persons with disabilities have access to supports and services that enable them to participate in community life

Goal 6: Safeguards for seniors and persons with disabilities are provided

LINK TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

The Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports aligns with the following goals of the Government of Alberta Strategic Business Plan.

Government of Alberta Goal	Ministry Services
Goal 5: Albertans will be healthy	• Provide optical and dental programs to assist low-and moderate-income seniors with the cost of eyeglasses and dental treatment. • Assist individuals to maintain their independence with the provision of medical equipment through the Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) program. • Implement accommodation standards for supportive living and long-term care facilities. • Facilitate supportive living options for seniors, including the Seniors Lodge Program. • Encourage public, private, and non-profit housing sectors to develop supportive living options that serve identified community needs through approved capital funding. • Provide health-related supports through the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program.

Government of Alberta Goal	Ministry Services
Goal 6: Albertans will be independent and our children will be well cared for	• Provide a monthly living allowance to clients through the AISH program. • Deliver or support programs to enable persons with disabilities to participate in community life. • Provide services, information and safeguards that enhance the safety and security of adult Albertans. • Deliver financial supports for lower-income seniors through the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors programs. • Provide information on government programs and services for seniors.

Government of Alberta Priority

The Ministry of Seniors and Community Supports is working with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to achieve the following government priority:

- *Increase access to quality health care and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of health care service delivery.*

SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

In its strategic planning process, the Ministry recognizes the diversity and breadth of its client population. Identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities is an important part of setting the Ministry's strategic priorities. The following factors have influenced the Ministry in developing its goals, strategies and priorities:

1. An Aging Population Requires Effective Planning

Over the next decade, the number of Albertans aged 65 and over is projected to grow by more than 40 per cent as the baby boom generation begins reaching its senior years. Research indicates that future seniors will have different needs and expectations than current seniors. The growing number of seniors, and their changing needs, will require government, communities, families and individuals to plan now for tomorrow's seniors.

2. New Technologies Increase Independence

Advances in medical equipment and more effective drugs can significantly improve the quality of people's lives. New advances in medical equipment, such as power lifts, power beds, augmentative communication devices and prosthetics may assist Albertans to remain at home longer and enhance participation in the community. Government has the opportunity to develop flexible approaches that assist Albertans to access improved drugs or medical equipment to reduce or offset the need for more costly facility care.

3. Coordination Essential in Supporting Individuals with Complex Needs

The number of adults with disabilities who have difficulty coping due to multiple challenges is increasing. These challenges may include mental health issues that can result in difficulties such as accessing appropriate housing and support services. The needs of these clients may require extensive case management and coordination of services from multiple ministries and service providers. There is an opportunity for the Ministry to work with families, communities and other government partners to develop a range of coordinated supports and services to better assist individuals with complex needs.

4. Strong Economy Drives Employment and Rising Costs

Alberta's strong economic growth is leading to new employment opportunities for older workers and persons with disabilities. Labour shortages may motivate employers to develop options to recruit and retain mature workers, such as flexible work arrangements and employee benefit programs. The tight labour market is also resulting in opportunities for increased participation in the workforce for underemployed groups, such as persons with disabilities. The strong economy is also resulting in higher living costs. Many of the Ministry's clients have relatively low or fixed incomes with limited capacity to adjust to the cumulative effect of rising costs. In recent years, the rapid escalation of costs for housing, food, utilities and transportation has been particularly challenging for low-income households. Agencies and organizations that are funded or regulated by the Ministry are affected by both labour and cost pressures. There is increased difficulty attracting and retaining skilled workers, particularly in the health and human services sectors, and operating costs are rising.

5. Community Inclusion Improves Quality of Life

Accessing community-based supports allows individuals to live and participate in their communities where they may experience greater quality of life. Addressing barriers that affect the degree to which seniors and persons with disabilities can access accommodation, employment, or volunteer and recreational opportunities is a challenge for the Ministry. Government and communities have a shared role in fostering participation. There is an opportunity for the Ministry to develop partnerships with stakeholders to increase opportunities for community participation.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2008-11

Through the Ministry's review of external factors, the strategic priorities described below have been identified. These are in addition to the important ongoing core activities of the Ministry.

BUILDING OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

1. Improve quality, supply and client choice in the continuing care system

The Ministry will build on previous capital grant programs to facilitate the development of affordable supportive living options. In collaboration with Health and Wellness and other stakeholders, Seniors and Community Supports will create opportunities for innovation by removing barriers and considering incentives for developing an appropriate range of continuing care accommodation options. The Ministry will continue quality improvements by implementing accommodation standards in a greater range of continuing care settings.

Linkage:
Goals 1, 3, 4, and 6

2. **Support persons with disabilities' independence and self-reliance by providing increased employability incentives, including an increase in the amount that can be earned by Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) recipients from $1000 to $1500**

Linkage:
Goals 2, 4, and 5

Seniors and Community Supports will work with Employment and Immigration to ensure that Ministry clients who wish to work have the opportunity and the supports to participate in Alberta's strong economy. The Ministry will coordinate and improve employment supports by refining existing programs and policies to remove barriers to employment for clients. The Ministry will provide increased employability incentives, including an increase in the amount that can be earned by individual Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) recipients, with a corresponding increase for clients with families.

CORE BUSINESSES, GOALS, STRATEGIES & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Core Business One: Provide targeted financial assistance

GOAL ONE **1** **Seniors in need have access to financial assistance to support independence**

What it means

Income is a major determinant of health and well-being. Low-income seniors have limited ability to respond to the rapid increases in the cost of living that Albertans have experienced in recent years. Programs such as the Alberta Seniors Benefit and Special Needs Assistance for Seniors provide important income supplements to low-income seniors. Of the 364,000 Albertans aged 65 and older, approximately 40 per cent receive Alberta Seniors Benefit, an income-based program that provides monthly cash payments to eligible lower-income seniors. In addition, the Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program provides a lump-sum cash payment to eligible seniors who demonstrate they are experiencing difficulty in meeting one-time expenses. These income-based programs help seniors maintain their independence and continue as participating and contributing members of Alberta's vibrant communities. In addition, the Education Property Tax Assistance for Seniors program is available to assist senior homeowners with increases in the education tax portion of their property taxes.

The aging of the population will have implications for the ways in which the Ministry, and government as a whole, provide supports and services to seniors. A key focus for the Ministry is the development of mechanisms to forecast, plan for and model the needs of future seniors. These tools will help to inform policy and program development.

It is anticipated that tomorrow's seniors will have different circumstances and expectations than current seniors, including their participation in the labour force. Individuals and employers are interested in ways to facilitate a more gradual transition from work to retirement, as many people may opt to remain in the workforce on a part-time or seasonal capacity. The Ministry is working to support the efforts of its partners in considering flexible approaches to recruit and retain the experience and skills of mature workers, which will contribute to addressing labour force shortages facing the province.

Strategies

1.1 Forecast, plan for and model seniors' policies and programs to respond to the changing needs of seniors.

1.2 Support the work of the Demographic Planning Commission.

1.3 Collaborate with other ministries to develop information products that provide Albertans with retirement preparedness information, including financial planning.

1.4 Improve the responsiveness of targeted seniors' financial assistance programs.

Performance Measures		Last Actual (Year)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
1.a	Difference between Alberta seniors' average total income and the national average for seniors' average total income	+13.4% (2005)	Exceed the national average	Exceed the national average	Exceed the national average
1.b	Assessment time in working days for Special Needs Assistance for Seniors program applications	10 days (2006-07)	10 days	9 days	9 days

GOAL TWO

2 Albertans with a severe and permanent disability have access to financial assistance that enables them to become as independent as possible

What it means

Income is one of the major determinants of health, well-being and independence, and some Albertans need access to financial assistance. Through the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped program, the Ministry provides a monthly living allowance to help clients meet their needs. Over 36,000 Albertans with severe disabilities receive assistance from the AISH program, including 8,500 clients who receive personal benefits to help with extra monthly or one-time expenses. Approximately 50 per cent of AISH clients have other sources of income, such as employment income or Canada Pension Plan-Disability benefits, and the AISH living allowance supplements their income to help them meet their needs. For the remaining 50 per cent of AISH clients, the AISH living allowance is their only source of income. Together with other supports, such as the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program, this assistance helps persons with disabilities contribute to and participate in the community.

Participation in volunteer activities and employment helps persons with disabilities be included in the community and become more independent and self-reliant. The Ministry partners with Employment and Immigration, businesses and community agencies to provide a range of supports and services that assist persons with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining and maintaining work. The Ministry provides employment supports, such as job placement, follow up supports and supports to employers. Ministry programs are committed to helping persons with disabilities pursue employment to the extent they are able and assisting them to become as independent as possible.

Strategies

2.1 Remove barriers for persons with disabilities to participate in the community through employment or volunteer opportunities.

2.2 Increase the monthly earnings exemption for individual AISH clients, with a corresponding increase for clients with families.

2.3 Enhance employment-related supports available through Ministry programs.

2.4 Identify and implement ongoing improvements to financial assistance programs provided by the Ministry for persons with disabilities.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2006-07)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
2.a Percentage of AISH clients who agree that personal benefits help them live more independently than if they were unable to access these benefits	79%	80%	82%	85%

New Performance Measure Under Development:

Percentage of AISH clients who reported employment income.

Core Business Two: Plan, provide and coordinate supports and services for living in the community

GOAL THREE

3 Seniors and persons with disabilities have appropriate supportive living options

What it means

The continuing care system is comprised of three streams: home living, supportive living and facility living (long-term care). Approximately 21,000 Albertans are accommodated in supportive living, which includes seniors' lodges funded through the Ministry, designated assisted living units and other supportive living environments. In addition, approximately 14,000 people live in long-term care facilities, including auxiliary hospitals and nursing homes. The Ministry works with stakeholders to foster the development of supportive living options that are appropriate for changing needs and life stages, with the goal of assisting seniors and persons with disabilities to live as independently as possible.

The Ministry facilitates the development of affordable supportive living projects for seniors and persons with disabilities. To enhance safety and quality of accommodation, the Ministry is also responsible for monitoring and enforcing accommodation standards for supportive living and long-term care facilities.

Strategies

3.1 Develop a plan and allocate approved capital funding to increase the supply of sustainable and affordable supportive living options.

3.2 Enhance the quality of accommodation in supportive living and long-term care facilities through mechanisms such as licensing, accreditation and public reporting.

3.3 Focus resources on the effective use and maintenance of provincially supported seniors' lodges.

3.4 Propose legislation and regulations governing supportive living accommodations.

3.5 In consultation with key stakeholders, explore innovative approaches to increase supply and choice in continuing care accommodation options.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2006-07)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
3.a Number of affordable supportive living units for aging in place developed with support from provincial funding	553	800	450	400

New Performance Measure under Development:
Quality of accommodation services provided in supportive living and long-term care facilities, as indicated by the percentage of facilities reviewed that meet or exceed provincial standards.

GOAL FOUR

4 The Ministry's health-related supports and services enhance independence and well-being

What it means

Health-related supports and services enhance well-being by enabling Ministry clients to maintain their independence in their homes and communities. These supports, including assistive technologies, can also help clients to achieve and maintain employment. To support these goals, the Ministry provides a number of programs and benefits, including the Alberta Aids to Daily Living program, health-related benefits through the AISH program, and dental and optical programs for seniors.

AADL helps Albertans of all ages who have a long-term disability, chronic illness or terminal illness maintain their independence through the provision of hearing and communication devices, medical/surgical supplies, mobility equipment, prosthetics and orthotics, custom footwear and seating, and respiratory equipment.

Health-related benefits for AISH clients include premium-free Alberta Health Care Insurance, eye and dental care, emergency ambulance services, prescription drugs, essential diabetic supplies, and exemption from AADL co-pay fees. The Ministry's dental and optical programs assist low- and moderate-income seniors with the cost of dental treatment and eyeglasses.

Strategies

4.1 Develop and implement a coordinated health benefits program to ease access and enhance accountability and sustainability.

4.2 Develop, implement and evaluate pilot projects for assistive technology to support independence.

Performance Measure	Last Actual (2005-06)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
4.a Percentage of AADL clients who agreed that AADL helped them be more independent in their homes or residences	90%	n/a*	90%	n/a*

* Survey conducted every two years.

GOAL FIVE

5 Seniors and persons with disabilities have access to supports and services that enable them to participate in community life

What it means

Participating in the community means being able to work, volunteer, take advantage of educational and recreational opportunities, and engage in other chosen activities. Communities play a key role in creating accessible and supportive environments. Family and other unpaid caregivers play a crucial role in assisting seniors and persons with disabilities to live and participate in the community. The Ministry works with partners to create awareness of barriers and to identify strategies to enable seniors and persons with disabilities to participate in community life.

The Persons with Developmental Disabilities Community Boards work to strengthen and promote long-term connections between persons with developmental disabilities and their community. Albertans with disabilities may also receive community support services through the Alberta Brain Injury Initiative and the Program Development for Persons with Disabilities Initiative. The AISH program provides clients with information and referrals to community programs.

The Ministry's clients, their families and service providers can access information through service coordinators in the community, the Seniors Information Line, Seniors Information Services Offices, publications and the Ministry's website. In

addition, where possible, the Ministry provides information in alternate formats for persons with disabilities.

Strategies

5.1 Assist individuals and families in accessing information and navigating community resources.

5.2 Explore flexible funding options to achieve better outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities.

5.3 Enhance the coordination of supports and services for persons with disabilities.

Performance Measures		Last Actual (2006-07)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
5.a	Satisfaction of families/guardians of adults with developmental disabilities with PDD-funded services	83.4%	85%	n/a*	87%

	Performance Measures	Last Actual (2006-07)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
5.b	Percentage of people with brain injuries and/or other disabilities and their families/caregivers reporting they feel supported by the Alberta Brain Injury and Program Development for Persons with Disabilities (Gaps in Services) initiatives				
	• Persons with brain injury and/or other disabilities	86%	90%	91%	92%
	• Families/caregivers	83%	85%	86%	87%
5.c	Satisfaction with the information services provided by the Seniors Information Line	91%	93%	93%	93%

* Survey conducted every two years.

GOAL SIX **6**

Safeguards for seniors and persons with disabilities are provided

What it means

A safe and secure environment is necessary for well-being and quality of life. The Ministry plays an important role in addressing the safety and security needs of adults who may be vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Safety and security must be balanced with supporting the rights of Albertans to direct their own lives. Through the *Protection for Persons in Care Act*, the Ministry investigates and responds to complaints of abuse of people receiving government-funded care services. Recommendations arising from investigations are aimed at improving the safety and well-being of Albertans. In addition, the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program has a protocol to address abuse of adults with developmental disabilities. The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) administers *Dependent Adults Act* and *Personal Directives Act* legislation that protects vulnerable adults when they are not able to make their own personal decisions.

Elder abuse is a growing issue. Abuse affects both men and women from all income levels and cultural backgrounds. As the number of seniors increases, incidents of abuse are expected to rise. The Ministry works with other ministries, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta, other levels of government and community partners to assist seniors and raise awareness of elder abuse.

The OPG promotes dependent adults' autonomy through a range of decision-making services and provides supports to private guardians that encourage dependent adults to contribute to their own personal decisions whenever possible. The PDD program promotes better outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities through family and self-advocacy leadership initiatives that enhance an individual's ability to make personal decisions, including the supports and services they access.

Strategies

6.1 Improve and coordinate policies, programs, and legislation to strengthen the Ministry's role in protecting adult Albertans.

6.2 Work with Ministry partners to prevent and raise awareness of elder abuse.

6.3 Implement substitute decision-making services that encourage adults with mental capacity limitations to participate in decisions and maintain their autonomy.

6.4 Deliver public education and other services to encourage Albertans to plan for the future through personal directives.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (year)	Target 2008-09	Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11
6.a Percentage of persons involved in Protection for Persons in Care investigations satisfied with the investigation process	57% (2006-07)	60%	63%	65%
6.b Satisfaction with supports and decision-making services provided by the Office of the Public Guardian of:				
▪ Private Guardians	92% (2005-06)	n/a*	90%	n/a*
▪ Service providers	87% (2005-06)	n/a*	90%	n/a*
▪ Dependent adults	88% (2005-06)	n/a*	90%	n/a*

* Survey conducted every two years.

SENIORS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

EXPENSE BY CORE BUSINESS

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable					
	2006-07 Actual	**2007-08 Budget**	**2007-08 Forecast**	**2008-09 Estimate**	**2009-10 Target**	**2010-11 Target**
Provide targeted financial assistance	677,824	795,774	739,558	831,540	860,929	876,722
Plan, provide and coordinate supports and services for living in the community	913,004	964,963	1,002,181	1,082,610	1,075,065	1,078,022
MINISTRY EXPENSE	1,590,828	1,760,737	1,741,739	1,914,150	1,935,994	1,954,744

MINISTRY STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable					
	2006-07 Actual	2007-08 Budget	2007-08 Forecast	2008-09 Estimate	2009-10 Target	2010-11 Target
REVENUE						
Transfers from Government of Canada	160,546	274,261	274,141	300,358	303,977	316,329
Investment Income	470	-	-	-	-	-
Premiums, Fees and Licences	1,420	1,140	1,140	1,000	1,000	1,000
Other Revenue	7,242	3,265	3,265	3,310	3,460	3,618
MINISTRY REVENUE	169,678	278,666	278,546	304,668	308,437	320,947
EXPENSE						
Program						
Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	540,334	643,194	601,694	666,096	690,940	706,554
Support to Persons with Developmental Disabilities	501,612	525,770	540,770	570,875	607,409	610,207
Alberta Seniors Benefit	265,019	285,530	269,530	298,446	303,046	303,264
Seniors Dental and Optical Assistance	63,452	66,701	60,201	69,725	70,258	70,282
Special Needs Assistance for Seniors	23,455	26,969	25,969	27,084	27,142	27,185
School Property Tax Assistance	3,733	11,000	6,000	11,000	11,000	11,000

Seniors Lodge Assistance	32,197	36,120	31,120	32,120	32,120	32,120
Supportive Living and Long Term Care	2,478	8,231	5,231	5,950	6,043	5,360
Alberta Aids to Daily Living	89,836	92,248	100,248	97,884	98,041	98,155
Disability and Community Support Programs	11,998	18,816	13,816	21,321	21,497	21,625
Public Guardian Services	6,590	7,832	7,832	8,993	9,286	9,500
Ministry Support Services	6,733	7,922	7,924	8,864	9,017	9,297
Lodge Renovations and Repairs	-	-	-	15,600	-	-
Rural Affordable Supportive Living	27,054	-	23,100	2,000	-	-
Affordable Supportive Living Initiative	15,667	30,219	48,119	77,997	50,000	50,000
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	670	185	185	195	195	195
MINISTRY EXPENSE	1,590,828	1,760,737	1,741,739	1,914,150	1,935,994	1,954,744
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(3)	-	-	-	-	-
NET OPERATING RESULT	(1,421,153)	(1,482,071)	(1,463,193)	(1,609,482)	(1,627,557)	(1,633,797)

CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT
(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable					
	2006-07 Actual	**2007-08 Budget**	**2007-08 Forecast**	**2008-09 Estimate**	**2009-10 Target**	**2010-11 Target**
Ministry Revenue	169,678	278,666	278,546	304,668	308,437	320,947
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Revenue	169,678	278,666	278,546	304,668	308,437	320,947
Ministry Expense	1,590,828	1,760,737	1,741,739	1,914,150	1,935,994	1,954,744
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Expense	**1,590,828**	**1,760,737**	**1,741,739**	**1,914,150**	**1,935,994**	**1,954,744**
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(3)	-	-	-	-	-
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	(1,421,153)	(1,482,071)	(1,463,193)	(1,609,482)	(1,627,557)	(1,633,797)

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